

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 NSC-05
OMB-01 DHA-02 CU-02 NEA-10 EB-08 USPS-01 OC-06 CCO-00
ORM-02 SCA-01 H-01 INSE-00 DODE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 /093 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/RPM:TMSAVAGE:EB
APPROVED BY EUR/RPM:HAHOLMES
EUR/RPM:JIMARESCA
INR/RSE:JMANDEL
EUR/SOV:LWILLEMS
-----320041Z 130054 /63

O R 320003Z JAN 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 021699

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, PFOR, CSCE, UR

SUBJECT: CSCE: SOVIET MOVES AGAINST ORLOV GROUP

1. MISSION MAY CIRCULATE FOLLOWING INR REPORT IN NATO
POLADS IN CONTEXT OF CONTINUING EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION
ON CSCE. IN DISTRIBUTING REPORT TO ALLIES YOU SHOULD
IDENTIFY PAPER AS AN INDEPENDENT INR STUDY, NOT NECESSARILY
REPRESENTING FULLY COORDINATED USG VIEWS.

2. BEGIN TEXT: SOVIET MOVES AGAINST PUBLIC GROUP ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF HELSINKI ACCORDS
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3. THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT'S RECENT MOVES AGAINST THE
"PUBLIC GROUP TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI
ACCORDS"--THE SO-CALLED ORLOV GROUP--REFLECT MOUNTING
SOVIET CONCERN THAT THE USSR'S RECORD ON THE HUMANITARIAN
ASPECTS OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT WILL BE CALLED INTO
QUESTION AT THE CSCE MEETING IN BELGRADE IN JUNE. THE
PUBLIC GROUP, AN ORGANIZATION OF PROMINENT SOVIET DISSI-
DENTS, HAS DOCUMENTED AND REPORTED TO THE WEST THE

KREMLIN'S VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USSR. THE

KREMLIN'S INITIAL STEPS TO CURTAIL THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES AND DISCREDIT ITS MEMBERS HAVE NOT HAD THE DESIRED RESULTS; CONTINUED WESTERN PUBLICITY HAS CONSTRAINED SOVIET OPTIONS IN DEALING WITH ITS MEMBERS.

4. BACKGROUND. ON MAY 12, 1976, 11 MEMBERS OF THE DISSIDENT HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE USSR, LED BY PHYSICIST YURIY ORLOV, FORMED A "PUBLIC GROUP TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS." THE GROUP'S STATED OBJECTIVES WERE TO PROMOTE SOVIET COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE FINAL ACT OF THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (CSCE) WHICH DEAL WITH HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS, NOTABLY THE COMMITMENT TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS. SPECIFICALLY TARGETED WERE FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, CONSCIENCE, AND RELIGION (SECTION 1, ARTICLE VII) AND COOPERATION IN SUCH HUMANITARIAN AREAS AS REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES, DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION, AND CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONTACTS AND EXCHANGES (THE SO-CALLED BASKETT III). THE GROUP NOTED IN ITS FOUNDING STATEMENT THAT ITS PRIMARY TASK WOULD BE TO GATHER INFORMATION AND INFORM THE OTHER 34 SIGNATORY STATES OF SOVIET VIOLATIONS OF THESE HUMANITARIAN PROVISIONS. THIS IT HAS DONE.

5. THE INITIAL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP WERE WELL-KNOWN
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ACTIVISTS IN THE MOSCOW DISSIDENT COMMUNITY. THEY INCLUDED, IN ADDITION TO ORLOV, A CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ARMENIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE; ELENA BONNER, WHO IS THE WIFE OF NOVEL LAUREATE ANDREY SAKHAROV AND FREQUENTLY ACTS ON HIS BEHALF; WELL-KNOWN DISSIDENT AND FORMER GENERAL PIOTR GRIGORENKO; HISTORIAN MIKHAIL BERNSTAM; SINOLOGIST VITALY RUBIN; ALEXANDER GINSBURG, SOLZHENITSYN'S FORMER SECRETARY; JEWISH ACTIVIST ANATOLIY SHARANSKY; AND SEVERAL OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE DEMOCRATIC HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. A SECOND CHAPTER OF THE GROUP WAS FORMED IN KIEV IN MID-NOVEMBER, HEADED BY THE UKRAINIAN DISSIDENT POET MIKOLA RUDENKO, AND A THIRD CHAPTER WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE LITHUANIAN CAPITAL OF VILNYUS IN LATE NOVEMBER.

6. DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS. ALTHOUGH THE GROUP'S CRITICISMS OF SOVIET PRACTICES ARE NOT NEW, THEY PROVIDE THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE DOCUMENTATION TO DATE OF SYSTEMATIC SOVIET VIOLATIONS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROVISIONS OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS. THE GROUP REJECTS THE SOVIET CONTENTION THAT WESTERN CRITICISMS CONSTITUTE #INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS." ACTING ON THIS CONVICTION, THEY HAVE

ASSEMBLED AND DISTRIBUTED TO THE EMBASSIES OF THE OTHER 34 SIGNATORIES OF THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT 14 DOCUMENTS DEALING WITH A WIDE RANGE OF CSCE-RELATED ISSUES, INCLUDING

--THE CONTINUATION OF SOVIET PERSECUTION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEVERS;
--RESTRICTIONS ON THE FREE EMIGRATION AND REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES;
--OFFICIAL INTERFERENCE WITH INTERNATIONAL POSTAL, TELEPHONE, AND TELEGRAM COMMUNICATIONS;
--DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS; AND
--INTERFERENCE WITH THE RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES (BECAUSE THE GROUP HAS EXTENSIVE AND WIDE-RANGING CONTACTS WITH OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND DISSIDENTS, IT HAS
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BEEN ABLE TO COLLECT DATA ON VIOLATIONS WHICH WOULD NOT OTHERWISE BE AVAILABLE. DOCUMENTS CIRCULATED SO FAR DEAL WITH A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS AND COVER AN ENORMOUS GEOGRAPHIC AREA, INCLUDING REPORTS ON REMOTE REGIONS NOT USUALLY ACCESSIBLE TO FOREIGN OBSERVERS. BECAUSE WESTERN RADIO BROADCASTS TO THE USSR DEALING WITH THESE ACTIVITIES HAVE FOSTERED INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE HELSINKI PROVISIONS AMONG THE SOVIET PUBLIC, SEVERAL OTHER GROUPS MAY HAVE BEEN STIMULATED TO GREATER ACTIVISM AS A RESULT, NOTABLY THE PENTACOSTALISTS IN THE FAR EASTERN PORT OF NAKHODKA AND THE CRIMEAN TATARS IN THE TRANS-URALS REGION.)

7. THE ORLOV GROUP DIFFERS FROM OTHER DISSIDENT HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT RESPECTS. IT

--BASES ITSELF EXCLUSIVELY ON THE PRINCIPLES LAID OUT IN THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT, TO WHICH THE SOVIET UNION HAS SUBSCRIBED, AND SUBJECTS SOVIET CSCE PERFORMANCE TO CRITICAL SCRUTINY;
-- IS WELL-ORGANIZED, WITH EXTENSIVE CONTACTS AMONG OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS, AND WORKS SYSTEMATICALLY TO COLLECT INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF HELSINKI VIOLATIONS; AND
--HAS ATTRACTED EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY AND SUPPORT ABROAD FOR ITS ACTIVITIES.

8. AS A RESULT, IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR THE AUTHORITIES TO SUPPRESS THE GROUP WITHOUT GIVING SUBSTANCE TO THE CHARGES OF VIOLATIONS LEVIED AGAINST THEM. THE ORLOV GROUP'S CRITICISM OF SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS POINTS UP THE BASIC INCOMPATIBILITY OF CERTAIN SOVIET LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT. IT ALSO DEMONSTRATES THAT CHANGES

PROCLAIMED BY THE SOVIETS IN SUCH AREAS AS THE REDUCTION IN FEES FOR EXIT VISAS, SIMPLIFICATION OF EMIGRATION
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APPLICATION PROCEDURES, ETC., ARE SUPERFICIAL GESTURES THAT DO NOT FUNDAMENTALLY IMPROVE RESTRICTIVE SOVIET PRACTICES. IN SUM, ORLOV SERIOUSLY CHALLENGES THE SOVIETS' INTERPRETATION OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT AND QUESTIONS THE VERACITY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ASSERTIONS OF COMPLIANCE.

9. FOREIGN REPERCUSSIONS. THE ORLOV GROUP HAS ALREADY ATTRACTED SUFFICIENT SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT ABROAD TO CAUSE THE SOVIETS CONSIDERABLE EMBARRASSMENT AND, AT THE SAME TIME, TO PLACE ADDITIONAL CONSTRAINTS ON THEIR METHODS OF COUNTERING ITS ACTIVITIES. THROUGH DISSEMINATION OF THE GROUP'S REPORTS IN SAMIZDAT (UNAUTHORIZED PUBLICATION) AND CONTACTS WITH WESTERN NEWSMEN AND EMBASSIES, INFORMATION ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE USSR AND SOVIET VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GENERAL HAVE BEEN REACHING BROAD CIRCLES OF WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION AND HAVE ALSO INFLUENCED THE TACTICS OF WESTERN COMMUNIST PARTIES. THE LATTER HAVE FOR REASONS OF THEIR OWN BECOME INCREASINGLY CRITICAL OF SOVIET PRACTICES IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA. THE MATERIAL ALSO FIGURED IN THE RECENT ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS IN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE US, WHERE IT WAS USED BY SOME TO QUESTION THE VALUE OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS AND THE FUTURE OF DETENTE.

10. REGIME COUNTERMOVES. GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE ORLOV GROUP'S CRITICISMS, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAS SOUGHT TO CIRCUMSCRIBE ITS ACTIVITIES AND DISCREDIT ITS MEMBERS WITHOUT PROVOKING STRONG WESTERN REACTION. SOVIET TACTICS HAVE, SO FAR, FALLEN SHORT OF IMPRISONMENT BUT INCLUDE:

--SURVEILLANCE AND HARASSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS;
--A CAMPAIGN OF VILIFICATION AIMED AT DISCREDITING INDIVIDUALS CONNECTED WITH THE GROUP, CHARACTERIZING THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES AS "ANTI-SOVIET" AND "UNCONSTITUTIONAL"
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AND DEPRECATING INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS AS "PERSONS WITH NO EMPLOYMENT OR OCCUPATION";
--A RECENT ATTEMPT TO LINK THE GROUP WITH FOREIGN ORGANIZATIONS HOSTILE TO THE SOVIET UNION, SUCH AS THE NTS (NATIONAL LABOR ALLIANCE, AN ANTI-SOVIET EMIGRE ORGANIZATION BASED IN WEST GERMANY), AND WITH FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES, IMPLYING THAT THEIR POSSESSION OF FOREIGN CURRENCY--PLANTED BY THE KGB DURING ITS SEARCHES--WAS SOMEHOW SUBVERSIVE;

--EMIGRATION PERMISSION TO SOME MEMBERS OF THE GROUP, SUCH AS LONG-TERM REFUSENIKS VITALIY RUBIN AND MIKHAIL BERNSTAM, WHO WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY WITHIN

A FORTNIGHT OF PUBLICATION OF THE GROUP'S FOUNDING STATEMENT;

--A SEARCH OF THE APARTMENTS OF SEVERAL MEMBERS, BEGINNING WITH THOSE IN KIEV, AND CONFISCATION OF MATERIALS IN A MANNER WHICH SUGGESTS THAT CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS MAY BE OPENED AGAINST THEM. (DR. ORLOV HIMSELF HAS BEEN PICKED UP FOR QUESTIONING BY THE KGB AND WAS TOLD THAT A CASE WAS BEING PREPARED AGAINST SOME MEMBERS OF THE GROUP.)

11. PREPARATION FOR BELGRADE. THE LATEST MOVES AGAINST THE ORLOV GROUP ARE UNDOUBTEDLY CONNECTED WITH SOVIET PREPARATIONS FOR THE UPCOMING CSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE IN BELGRADE. THE KREMLIN HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT DOES NOT INTEND TO HAVE ITS RECORD ON BASKET III BECOME AN ISSUE AT THE MEETING, AND IT HOPES TO PREVENT DAMAGING INFORMATION FROM REACHING THE WEST FROM INTERNAL CRITICS.

12. THE SOVIET MOVES HAVE BEEN ECHOED IN OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, WHERE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO CLAMP DOWN ON DISSIDENTS HAS BEGUN IN RECENT WEEKS. THE CZECHOSLOVAK AUTHORITIES ARE HARASSING DISSIDENT SIGNATORIES OF A BILL OF COMPLAINTS, THE EAST GERMANS ARE CRACKING DOWN ON CRITICS IN THE WAKE OF THE EXPULSION OF POPULAR SINGER CONFIDENTIAL

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WOLF BIERMAN, AND THE POLES ARE MOVING AGAINST ORGANIZED DISSIDENT WORKERS.

13. THE TIMING OF THESE MEASURES SUGGESTS IN PART THAT THE SOVIETS HAD HOPED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON AND THE PREOCCUPATION WITH THE TRANSITION TO A NEW ADMINISTRATION IN THE US TO DISTRACT WESTERN ATTENTION. IN ANY EVENT, THE EXCHANGE OF IMPRISONED SOVIET DISSIDENT BUKOVSKY FOR CHILEAN COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER CORVALAN HAS, TO SOME EXTENT, UPSTAGED THE MOVES AGAINST THE ORLOV GROUP. MOSCOW NO DOUBT HOPES THAT THE STEPS TAKEN NOW TO CURTAIL THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES WILL BE FORGOTTEN BY THE TIME THE BELGRADE MEETING TAKES PLACE.

14. WHATEVER MOSCOW'S CALCULATIONS, THE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO THE MOVES AGAINST ORLOV AND OTHER DISSIDENTS HAS GENERATED WIDESPREAD REACTIONS IN THE WEST:

--WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES HAVE REPEATED THEIR CRITICISMS OF SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES;

--THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION HAS REITERATED THE IMPORTANCE IT ATTACHES TO THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS; AND

--THE US CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE, AMONG OTHERS, CONTINUES TO MONITOR THE FATE OF THE ORLOV GROUP WITH A GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST.

15. THE SOVIETS OBVIOUSLY ARE TRYING TO NEUTRALIZE THE EFFORTS OF THE ORLOV GROUP BEFORE THE BELGRADE REVIEW MEETING TAKES PLACE. HOWEVER, THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE OF A PAUSE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S HARASSMENT OF THE GROUP IN RESPONSE TO THE NEGATIVE PUBLIC REACTION IN THE WEST. ORLOV AND COMPANY REALIZE THAT THIS MAY BE MERELY A RESPITE, BUT REGARD THE RECENT EASING OF PRESSURES ON THEM AS A MINOR, IF TEMPORARY, VICTORY. THEY ARE CLEARLY DETERMINED NOT TO BOW TO PRESSURES FROM THE KREMLIN. THE
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RESULT WILL BE A CONTINUATION OF THE STRUGGLE WITH ACCOMPANYING BAD PUBLICITY FOR THE SOVIETS. BOTH SIDES ARE ON A COLLISION COURSE AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE SO FOR THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE. END TEXT.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 22-Sep-1999 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COURT PROCEEDINGS, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, INFORMATION EXCHANGE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE021699
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR/RPM:TMSAVAGE:EB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770034-0761
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197702100/baaaevdu.tel
Line Count: 293
Litigation Code IDs:
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Message ID: c44a1fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3233079
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 970829
Subject: CSCE: SOVIET MOVES AGAINST ORLOV GROUP
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, UR, CSCE, NATO, (ORLOV, YURIY)
To: NATO INFO MOSCOW
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c44a1fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009